



A Message from our Executive Director

Habitat Board member **Katie York** and I had an inspiring and energizing week at the annual Habitat on the Hill. We met with members of Congress to discuss federal solutions that will make an impact on housing affordability in our local communities.

We had the chance to network with like-minded people from hundreds of Habitat for Humanity affiliates and advocates nationwide. It was exciting to share ideas, and share a passion, for creating opportunities for safe, decent and affordable housing.

In Maryland, one in seven households spends half or more of its income on housing! Learn about the impact we've made in our local community, and around the nation, in the latest Habitat International [progress report](#), and advocate with us.

What can you do? Complete this [form](#) calling on Congress to invest in the supply of affordable homeownership. Together, we'll have a stronger collective voice, and help more families build strength, stability and independence through shelter.



Left to right: Board member, **Katie York**; Habitat for Humanity International CEO, **Jonathan Reckford**; and, Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna Executive Director, **Yvonne Golczewski**, at Habitat on the Hill 2023.

NOTE: Visit our [website](#) to read our press release about Habitat on the Hill.

For more pictures from Habitat on the Hill, see our recent [social media post](#).

Gala tickets are SOLD OUT!

We're still seeking additional sponsorships



We are so excited to be celebrating our 30th anniversary with a Gala on April 22nd at the **Bulle Rock Residents' Center Ballroom** (pictured). Tickets are now SOLD OUT but we are still seeking additional sponsors for this wonderful event. Please click on the blue button below to purchase sponsorships. Our appreciation and gratitude go out to **The Local**, which will be catering the delicious menu for our event, and to the following Gala sponsors to date:

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Harford Academy staff volunteer 100 "sweat equity" hours for homebuyer LaTera

Approximately 15 members of Bel Air's **Harford Academy** (formerly known as the John Archer School) volunteered to help Habitat homebuyer **LaTera** towards completing her required 250 hours of "sweat equity." The volunteers contributed the maximum allowable limit -- 100 Friends & Family hours -- in a show of support for the single mother of two, whose almost 13-year-old daughter has cerebral palsy and attends their school.

Construction of LaTera's future home on Ohio Street, Havre de Grace, will begin in March and incorporate wheelchair-accessible features.

Questions about volunteering? Contact [Michele Louderback](#).



*In a recent [Facebook video](#) our Volunteer Coordinator, **Michele Louderback**, and the Harford Academy staff discuss the importance of volunteering, and why their volunteer day at Erie Street, Havre de Grace (pictured), was so meaningful. They plan to return and volunteer when we start building LaTera's future home. For more details, read our [press release](#).*

Want to learn more about LaTera and her family? Read her story in the [December 2022](#) issue of our newsletter.

Meet our current homebuyer

The story of Jade by Yvette Valentin, Director of Homeowner Services

When you volunteer at our build site and meet this homebuyer, you will quickly realize that she is independent, resourceful and resilient. She is a single mom of four children and her two youngest, both toddlers, were just recently diagnosed with Autism. She is the sole breadwinner for her family, and she, like many other single moms, relies on a support system of family and friends. But what happens when your support system is limited to only a few who can handle your youngest and most

vulnerable? In her words, “You just have to work harder and sacrifice more to make it all work.”

Each homeowner applicant must submit a family story to give us a little insight into why they need the stability of a Habitat home. In Jade’s case, she told us about the struggles she’s had in the renting world. There were times when her landlord had sold the home she was renting, and other times when they simply did not want to renew her lease. This resulted in her quickly having to find new affordable housing, which is extremely difficult under normal circumstances when you have ample time, but nearly impossible when you’re given such short notice. She and her children lived out of motels or with family and friends. It wasn’t ideal, but it was a Band-Aid solution until she could find something more permanent.

Most of us are lucky enough to have lived in the same house from birth until adulthood. We’ve had the same friends from elementary through high school, played “Kick the Can” and ridden bikes with the same neighborhood kids.

In contrast, our homebuyers’ children have had to move an average of five times in a 10-year period!

Jade is very excited about owning her home, and the chance to be in control of her own destiny rather than live in fear each month that she and her kids will have to move yet again. She will have a Habitat mortgage customized to what she can afford to pay. Her children will have stability, and the chance to do the things that other kids do, like play games and ride bikes, and make lifelong friends in their very own community. They will have a place to call home.

ReStore reaches 10,000 followers!

The ReStore held a contest to get to 10,000 Facebook followers, and the winner who was randomly chosen for getting us to our goal was Megan M.! Thank you to everyone who liked and shared our posts! Your involvement helps get the word out about our store inventory, our need for volunteers, and the free, convenient pickup service we offer for your donated items.



SAVE THE DATE: April 15

The ReStore is celebrating Earth Day with a paper shredding event and MORE. Follow the [ReStore](#) via social media for the latest updates!

Habitat Haiti: Turning plastic recycling into construction materials

Here's an excerpt from a letter sent to us by one of our tithe partners, Hábitat para la Humanidad Haití: “...we are continuing our work to turn plastic recycling into construction materials through strategic partnerships with local universities. The American University of the Caribbean in Les Cayes has created



a prototype building block, which was recently tested at the National Laboratory for Works and Building. The block, made of plastic and sand, has had positive test results, and is awaiting approval from the Ministry of Public Works, Transport, and Communications. This year, we are hoping to produce materials for all parts of a home and to build a demonstration home out of the materials.”

Sponsor Spotlights

Thank you to the following generous sponsors this month:

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changes lives every day!**

